STATEMENT FOR THE CHINATI FOUNDATION/ LA FUNDACIÓN CHINATI 1987

In November 1971 I came to Marfa, Texas, to make a home for the summers in the Southwest of the United States and the Northwest of Mexico, which before the Conquest was called Chichimeca. In 1973 and 1974 I bought three buildings and the land surrounding them, comprising a city block, which is now a large complex containing a great deal of my work and some by other artists. In 1975 I became a resident of Texas. In 1979 I began work on what is now the Chinati Foundation, a name given in 1986, the name of a nearby mountain.

The Chinati Foundation is the successor in Marfa to the Dia Art Foundation, which in 1979 purchased most of Fort D. A. Russell, where the Chinati Foundation is primarily located, as well as a very large building in the center of town which became an installation of John Chamberlain's work. Later, as I suggested, Dia purchased two sections on the Rio Grande, sixty miles away, as a site for a very large work of mine to be made of adobe, which was never begun. Also, Dia paid for the construction and purchase of five groups of my work, two of which are installed and three of which are not: fifteen pieces made of concrete, and 100 pieces made of mill aluminum, three vertical pieces, thirteen horizontal pieces, and two large works in stainless steel. Dia provided the work by Chamberlain.

The Chinati Foundation, Fundación Chinati, which is independent, is now one of the largest visible installations of contemporary art in the world, visible, not in storage. When it nears completion or even now, if my own complex is added, it is the largest, as befits Texas.

The enterprise in Marfa was meant to be constructive. The art was meant to be, and now will be, permanently installed and maintained in a space suitable to it. Most of the art was made for the existing buildings, which were dilapidated. The buildings were adjusted to the art as much as possible. New ones would have been better. Nevertheless, in reworking the old buildings, I've turned them into architecture.

It takes a great deal of time and thought to install work carefully. This should not always be thrown away. Most art is fragile and some should be placed and never moved again. Some work is too large, complex, and expensive to move. Somewhere a portion of contemporary art has to exist as an example of what the art and its context were meant to be. Somewhere, just as the platinum-iridium meter guarantees the tape measure, a strict measure must exist for the art of this time and place. Otherwise art is only show and monkey business.

The art and architecture of the past that we know is that which remains. The best is that which remains where it was painted, placed, or built. Most of the art of the past that could be moved was taken by conquerors. Almost all recent art is conquered as soon as it's made, since it's first shown for sale and once sold is exhibited as foreign in the alien museums. The public has no idea of art other than that it is something portable that can be bought. There is no constructive effort; there is no cooperative effort. This situation is primitive in relation to a few earlier and better times.

Art and architecture – all the arts – do not have to exist in isolation as they do now. This fault is very much a key to the present society. Architecture is nearly gone, but it, art, all of the arts, in fact all parts of the society, have to be rejoined, and joined more than they have ever been. This would be democratic in a good sense, unlike the present increasing fragmentation into separate but equal categories, equal within the arts, but inferior to the powerful bureaucracies.

José Ortega y Gasset wrote:

Pero lo más grave en esa aberración intelectualista que significa la beatería de la cultura no es eso, sino que consiste en presentar al hombre la cultura, el ensimismamiento, el pensamiento, como una gracia o joya que éste debe añadir a su vida, por tanto, como algo que se halla por lo pronto fuera de ella, como si existiese un vivir sin cultura y sin pensar, como si fuese posible vivir sin

ensimismarse. Con lo cual se colocaba a los hombres – como ante el escaparate de una joyería – en la opción de adquirir la cultura o prescindir de ella. Y, claro está, ante parejo dilema, a lo largo de estos años que estamos viviendo, los hombres no han vacilado, sino que han resuelto ensayar a fondo esto último e intentan rehuir todo ensimismamiento y entregarse a la plena alteración. Por eso en Europa hay sólo alteraciones.

But the most dangerous aspect of the intellectual aberration that this "bigotry of culture" signifies is not this; it consists in presenting culture, withdrawal into one's self, thought, as a grace or jewel that man is to add to his life, hence as something that provisionally lies outside of his life and as if there were life without culture and thought – as if it were possible to live without withdrawing into one's self. Men were set, as it were, before a jeweler's window – were given the choice of acquiring culture or doing without it. And it is clear that, faced with such a dilemma, during the years we are now living through men have not hesitated, but have resolved to explore the second alternative to its limits and are seeking to flee from all taking a stand within the self and to give themselves up to the opposite extreme. That is why Europe is in extremities today.[1]

Most of the activities which should support art, which claim to support art, which justify themselves so, are nearly irrelevant to it. These are the museums, the art bureaucrats, the critics, and the educators. Only the galleries – commerce – are not irrelevant, and they furnish an ambiguous situation, providing money necessary to live and work, but also a mercenary attitude, beyond the necessary business, which younger artists and the public are now quick to assume is part of the nature of art. Most older artists know very well that they are prior and separate from the galleries and certainly from the museums, but many younger artists accept the scheme, which has grown

since World War II as the nature of things. This new social structure is not part of the reality of art, and is killing it. This has to be resisted. I've always defended my work. I've installed every public exhibition and have kept and installed work in my own spaces, most of which are in my place in Marfa.

The Chinati Foundation is an attempt to continue this on a greater scale and also to extend the consideration to Flavin's and Chamberlain's work. This is nearly the only attempt I know of to show completely and naturally the present reality of art. Art must be the only activity which its practitioners don't control. We, after all, the "experts," and not so many, are told what to do by many upstart self-appointed experts.

It was my intention to have a comprehensive amount of work by Dan Flavin, John Chamberlain, and myself. I did not want to make another museum anthology. And three seemed all that could be done well. But I did want a more natural situation than became possible, which would mean having some work by other artists, mostly outdoors, for example that of Carl Andre, Claes Oldenburg, Richard Long, Richard Serra, and Larry Bell. Later the possibility arose, thanks to Annalee Newman, of installing the complete prints of Barnett Newman, which will eventually be accomplished by my foundation, which also has paintings by John Wesley. I have work in Marfa yet to be installed by Carl Andre, David Rabinowitch, Larry Bell, Richard Serra, Robert Irwin, Yayoi Kusama, Roy Lichtenstein, John Chamberlain, Richard Long, Dan Flavin, and others. There are prints and drawings by Josef Albers, Agnes Martin, Yves Klein, Lauretta Vinciarelli, and others. There is considerable new and old art from the Northwest Coast and from Chichimeca.

There is much to be done. No work was done on the six barracks for which Flavin designed large installations of fluorescent light. There is money, perhaps, to complete one. Several buildings are required for the installation of the three groups of work of mine that are in storage. There is money for one.

There is the projected work of adobe on the Rio Grande. The Arena, originally the gymnasium of Fort Russell, was to have had a large work of mine along both long walls, colored, possibly made of concrete, possibly made of metal by a factory in Switzerland. More concrete pieces of mine were planned for the large areas of Fort Russell now empty. The building for Barnett Newman's prints has become a problem for my foundation.

There are two extra barracks: the northern one should be restored and used as a print studio, an idea of Flavin's. The southern one should be a temporary exhibition space, unlike the rest of the spaces. Among the faults of the museums is a great simplicity as to what should be shown, which almost prohibits the exhibition of work by artists not in New York and especially prohibits that by artists from Europe and elsewhere.

There are several short buildings. One will be a museum for Fort Russell, which was originally Camp Marfa – MAPΦA. One will have some of Flavin's drawings for the six works. One should have the library of art and architecture that was planned. One building could contain the two dark rooms which Larry Bell first constructed in his studio and then at The Museum of Modern Art in New York, in fact, a great work which he is willing to make again. I would like one building to contain several paintings by Josef Albers, who is highly regarded, but not highly enough. A lost chance was to restore the adobe church in Ruidosa, near Sierra Chinati, and ask Ken Price to make work for the interior. Presidio County is poor economically and politically, but is, nevertheless, Raintree County.[2]

(Images 88, 109, 132, 133, 142)

1 José Ortega y Gasset, *Man and People*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: W. W. Norton, 1957), 31–32. This book is part of Judd's library in Marfa, Texas.

2 See Judd's note from 13 September 1986 and "Letter to the Editor" (19 October 1991) in this volume, 440 and 716, respectively.

First published: *The Chinati Foundation/La Fundación Chinati* (Marfa, TX: The Chinati Foundation/La Fundación Chinati, 1987); reprinted: *Eindhoven*, 110–14; partly in *Münster*, 65–67 and 64–65 (in German); *Paris*, 186–90 (in French).